

Madam Speaker, today the House of Representatives is voting on a jobs bill that will keep Americans working. This is a jobs bill that will keep 161,000 teachers in the classroom rather than in the unemployment line. This is a bill that prevents thousands of first-responders who are protecting our communities today from losing their jobs tomorrow. Passing this jobs bill is not a luxury or an act of political patronage as some Republicans claim. This bill is about saving and creating jobs while keeping communities in Minnesota and across the country safe, strong and sustainable as this economy recovers.

The Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, is to be commended for calling the House back into session during this August recess. The Education Jobs and Medicaid Assistance Act (H.R. 1586) needs to be passed and signed into law as soon as possible. Jobs are at stake. Families are at stake. The education of millions of students is at stake. Speaker Pelosi recognizes the crisis that state and local governments are facing, and she is committed, along with many of us, to making sure teachers stay in the classroom and states receive essential Medicaid assistance (FMAP) as soon as possible.

With states facing a \$140 billion fiscal year 2011 cumulative budget gap, there is a critical need for Washington to provide state fiscal relief that can sustain the economic recovery. The state fiscal crisis is tearing an already fragile safety net, hurting communities, and inflicting hardships on our most vulnerable citizens. Dozens of states, including Minnesota, have been hit hard by a loss of tax revenue as a result of workers losing their jobs and unemployment remaining high. State and local governments have been forced to cut 100,000 jobs in the last three months alone as they struggle to balance budgets. We know that police officers, first responders, teachers, and other vital government workers who keep our communities safe, strong and sustainable are getting laid off when our families need them on the job.

The \$26.1 billion in federal support for teachers and Medicaid provided in this bill is completely paid for by closing foreign tax loop holes exploited by corporations, rescinding funds from outdated programs, and cutting funding for other programs. This bill is not deficit neutral; it actually reduces the deficit by \$1.4 billion over ten years.

While paying for a bill that is projected to save or create nearly 320,000 jobs is not easy, I cannot hide my disappointment that nearly \$12 billion in offsets were achieved by reducing benefits to food stamp recipients starting in 2014. I hope the reductions in benefits, which are provided by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, are restored and hungry families are not forced to bear the burden of providing fiscal relief to state governments.

As our economy slowly recovers it remains in a fragile state. Congress has an obligation to act

to preserve jobs, sustain the economic recovery, and overcome the perpetual political game playing of a minority party that is willing to put 161,000 teachers in the unemployment line rather than keep them in the classroom. In Minnesota, this bill will provide \$167 million to prevent 2,800 teachers from being laid off. It will save the State of Minnesota \$346 million under a six month extension of the FMAP provision in the Recovery Act, according the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. In Minnesota's Fourth Congressional District, which I represent, nearly \$30 million in funding will keep 411 public school teachers in the classroom to the benefit of our children and our community.

It would be my hope that his bill will pass the House with bipartisan support. There is support from Democratic and Republican governors. Some 42 governors, including 16 Republicans, wrote to Congress seeking the Medicaid assistance provided in this bill. Their letter said the most efficient way to help states avoid further layoffs and service cuts that could otherwise slow the recovery is to provide a two-quarter extension of Medicaid aid.

Unfortunately in Congress my Republican colleagues are more concerned about November's election and playing politics than keeping teachers in the classroom. The \$10 billion provided to keep 161,000 teachers working for our children should be a litmus test for voters. This is a vote for jobs and for our children's future. This is a vote that will expose Republicans as either defenders of jobs or as nothing more than a party that cuts taxes for the rich, protects Wall Street executives, and is willing to throw 161,000 public school teachers out on the street while our children suffer.

I am proud to vote for this bill. I am proud to support the men and women who have chosen a career of service as educators in public schools. The benefits of this bill will be felt in every state and every public school in the country and I urge all of my colleagues to vote for H.R. 1586.

Madam Speaker, I yield back my time.